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*The Usefulness and Excellency of CHARITY-  
SCHOOLS.*

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A  
**S E R M O N**

Preach'd in the *Parish-Church* of

**St. SEPULCHRE,**

**A P R I L** the 29<sup>th</sup>, 1731.

**Being Thursday after Easter-Week ;**

**A T T H E**

Anniversary Meeting of the **C H I L D R E N**  
Educated in the *Charity-Schools* in and about the  
Cities of **L O N D O N** and **W E S T M I N S T E R**.

By the Right Reverend Father in G O D,

**J O S E P H**, Lord Bishop of Gloucester.  
*Wilcox*

*Publiſh'd at the Request of the Gentlemen concerned  
in the ſaid CHARITY.*

**L O N D O N,**

Printed by **J O S E P H D O W N I N G**, in *Bartholomew-  
Cloſe, near Weſt-Smithfield*, 1730.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHURCH

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHURCH

Being Thursday after Easter Week

AT THE

Church of the Child RAN  
Enacted in the  
City of LONDON



By the Right Reverend Father in God  
JOSEPH H. Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

Printed by the University of Church

LONDON  
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City of London



I P E T. iv. 10.

*As every Man hath received the Gift,  
even so minister the same one to  
another, as good Stewards of the  
manifold Grace of God.*



THE Christian Church is represent-  
ed in Holy Scripture, as a Mysti-  
cal Body, having, like the natural  
Body, many Members, some of  
higher Rank, others less honourable; but all  
of them so tempered together, and contrived  
for the Beauty and Service of the whole,  
that no one of them can say to another, *I* 1 Cor. xii.  
21.  
*have no Need of you*; and that on Account of  
their mutual Relation to, and Dependance  
upon each other, they should all have *such*



## 4 *The Usefulness and Excellency*

- Ver. 25. *Care one for another, that whether one Member suffer, all should suffer with it, or one*  
Ver. 26. *Member be honoured, all should rejoice with it.*

THE Meaning of which figurative Description is plainly this: That Christ's Church is a Society, whose Members have not only a  
<sup>1 Cor. xii.</sup> *Diversity of spiritual Gifts*, but an unequal Share likewise of the good Things of this World; and that therefore to promote the Happiness of the whole, it is required that those among them who are prosperous, should  
<sup>1 Thess. v. 14.</sup> *comfort the Afflicted; that the Strong should bear with the Infirmities of the Weak; and*  
<sup>1 Tim. vi. 17.</sup> *that such as are rich in this World, should be ready to give, and glad to distribute, out of their Plenty, a reasonable Proportion, to relieve the Necessity of those in Want.*

THIS Injunction was observed by the Primitive Christians with a Degree of Liberality, suitable to the Zeal of pious Men, living in unsettled Times, and under Persecution. They were generally of Opinion, that the World was then very near at an End; and that the second Coming of their Lord, which they were daily expecting, would make their Condition such as should not be liable to any  
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future Wants. And this inclined them to part freely with what they had ; to make *one Stock for the whole Society, and enjoy all Things in common ; they who had Land, selling it, as we read, and bringing the Money, and laying it at the Apostles Feet.* Acts iv. 32.

IT is true indeed that such a Method of *enjoying all Things in common*, tho' practicable among small Numbers or Societies, is not so proper for, nor can well consist with the Prosperity or Welfare of whole Nations ; and therefore the Practice beforementioned is to be considered, as adapted to those Times and Circumstances of the Christian Church ; as recorded for our Learning indeed, but rather to shew in what manner the Christian Religion sat out into the World, than for an exact Pattern to after Ages.

HOWEVER, it is withal very certain, that saving to every Man his Legal Rights, there is no Doctrine more inculcated by the Gospel, than that of Benevolence and Charity. For it directs its Disciples *to love as Brethren ;* 1 Pet. iii. 8. *to be pitiful and kind, and ready to do Good, even to them that hate them ; that while they have time, they should do Good to all Men, and* Gal. vi. 10. *especially unto them that are of the Household of Faith ;*

<sup>1</sup> *Joh. iii.* *Faith*; that when they see their Brother have  
<sup>17.</sup> need, they shut not up their Compassion from him; and, according to St. Peter in the Text, that as every Man hath received the Gift, even so they should minister the same one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God.

<sup>Heb. vi.</sup> <sup>10.</sup> IN applying which Words, to what they are so very applicable, *viz.* that good Work, that Labour of Love, which we are here met together to celebrate, and to praise God for, it will be requisite to observe to you these following Particulars, *viz.*

*First*, THAT every Man's Condition in this Life is allotted him by Providence, and all the good Things he is possessed of are *the Gifts of God*.

*Secondly*, THAT these Gifts are not bestowed upon Men absolutely, but in Trust, and for the Uses declared in God's Word; and therefore that the Possessors of them are oblig'd in Duty to minister the same as good Stewards.

*Thirdly*, THAT the Exercise of such a beneficent and publick Spirit, promotes a  
 ge-

general Happiness ; and is a common Blessing to the World.

And *Lastly*, How laudable an Instance of it is this extensive Charity ; this numerous Assembly of poor and friendless Children, which presents itself before you.

*First*, THAT every Man's Condition in this Life is allotted him by Providence, will be readily acknowledged by those, who believe the World to be under God's Government ; and that with his infinite Power and Wisdom he has the Goodness to take particular Cognizance of human Affairs. To such it can be no Question, but that the Almighty *ordereth all Things both in Heaven and Earth*, tho' many Times, and particularly in the Concerns of Mankind, his Arm be invisible ; that so great is the Bounty of God to us his Creatures, so tender his Concern for what befalls us, that *even the Hairs* Matt. x. *of our Head are numbred by him, who being* 30.  
Rom. 10. *over all, is rich unto all.* 12.

As Man indeed is a Creature endued with Reason, his Maker, who gave it to him, expects that he should pursue the Dictates of it,



it, and make use of all fair and proper means for obtaining the good Things of this World. And to encourage him to do so, God has for the most part favoured Industry with  
Prov. x. 4. Success, and permitted *the diligent Hand to make rich*; but yet to maintain his Prerogative, and assert his Sovereignty, he sometimes interrupts the Course of second Causes, in the civil, as well as in the natural World,  
Eccles. xi. 11. and suffers not *the Race to be always to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, Favour to the Skilful, nor Riches to Men of Understanding.*

THO' it may seem therefore, by the Competition and Struggle there is among Men, for the Things of this World, and by the Care they take to qualify themselves for Business, that Prosperity and Success is the sure Effect of their Labour, their Diligence or Ingenuity; and on the other Hand, that their miscarrying, and falling to Decay, is occasioned wholly by their Vice, their Ignorance, or their Sloth; yet it is certain that these are not the only, nor the most powerful Springs which human Affairs are moved by, but that there is a Master of the Works behind the Scenes, who contrives and over-rules the whole; and tho' he be unseen, allots to every

every Person his Station and Character, and the Part he is to act, upon the Theatre of this World.

Now this governing Power, which an Heathen would term Fate or Fortune, we are taught by true Religion to call Providence, *i. e.* the Will and Direction of God, who having made the World, and created Man, has an undoubted Authority over him, and assures us in his holy Word, that he exerts that Authority, *giving and taking away, humbling one, and exalting another, and doing whatsoever pleaseth him.* Psal. lxxv. 7. Psal. cxv. 3.

*The Rich and the Poor* (says Solomon in the Book of Proverbs) *meet together, the Lord is the Maker of them all*; not only the Maker of the Men, but the Maker likewise of their Circumstances. The Division of the World into Rich and Poor, and the different Condition and Degrees of Men from the highest to the lowest, is by his Appointment, who *having Power over the Works of his own Hands, fashioneth, without Controul, (as the Potter does the Clay) one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour.* Prov. xxii 2. Rom. ix. 21.

THE Apostle therefore argues very rightly in advising the *Corinthians*, 1 Epist. and 4 ch.

*not to be puffed up, nor to think of Men above that which is written. For who, says he, maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? What Foundation is there for Pride even in the most prosperous Man's Circumstances? whose Acquisitions and Endowments, and whose Being itself, are at the Mercy of an Almighty Lord, who, as he gave him all he has, can resume all again, whenever it shall seem agreeable to the Wisdom of his Providence.*

AND this may suffice for Proof of the first thing proposed, *viz.* That every Man's Condition in this Life is allotted him by Providence, and all the good things he is possessed of are *the Gifts of God*. I come now to observe,

*Secondly, THAT these Gifts are not bestowed upon Men absolutely, but in Trust, and for the Uses declared in God's Word, and therefore that the Possessors of them are obliged in Duty to minister the same as good Stewards.*

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THERE is a great Desire and Ambition in Man to be, if he could, independent, and the most pleasing Title his Possessions can afford him, is that of Proprietor and Freeholder. But in respect of God, no Man can, without Vanity and Presumption, assume such Titles ; for how great soever his Possessions are, he is in reality no more than a Steward ; the Talents he has are committed to him in trust, and for the Management of them he must be responsible.

THIS our Blessed Saviour illustrates by the Parable of a Man travelling into a far Country, who having called his Servants, and delivered unto them his Goods, to every Man according to his Ability, took his Journey, and returning a long time after to reckon with them, rewarded every one according to the Improvement he had made, and turned that slothful Servant out of all, who, tho' he had not wasted his Talent by Extravagance, had negligently let it lie dead and unprofitable.

*Matt. xxv.  
15.*

LET no Man therefore imagine himself to be at Liberty to do what he pleases with his Possessions, nor vainly conclude, that

whilst he consumes but his own, it matters not how idly and extravagantly he does it. For an Account of each particular will one Day be required; when it will be asked, what Good the Great, the Powerful, and the Rich in this World have been doing, how they have *honoured God with their*  
*Prov. iii. 9. Substance, and shewn their good Will to Men*  
*Luke x. 37. by Deeds of Mercy?* what Alms they have given to the Poor, to the denying themselves any Superfluity?

IT will avail but little on that Occasion, to reply and say, *Lord, when saw we thee*  
*Matt. xxv. 37. an hungred, or athirst, or a Stranger, or naked, or sick, and did not minister unto thee;* for his Answer we know will be this, *Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me.*

AND indeed, the Obligation of all the relative Offices between the High and the Low, the Rich and the Poor, the Powerful and the Helpless, and such like, is founded on the difference of Mens Condition and Circumstances in this World; is dictated by Natural Religion, and enforced by Gospel Precepts. And without this difference of Condition, neither  
 the

the various Offices of Life could be performed, nor some of the brightest Virtues in Religion have exerted themselves, and shined before Men: For were there a general Equality throughout the World, there would be an End of the poor Man's exercise of Humility, Labour, and Patience, as well as of the rich Man's Liberality. There would be no farther room for Acts of Mercy, were there none in a Condition to bestow, nor any standing in need of Relief and Charity. We are not therefore to impute the present State of Things either to a blind Chance, as if it were by Accident, or to want of Mercy in Providence, as if it were unjust, or unkind; since it is so very accountable why Things should be thus, and continue so to the End of the World, as our Blessed Saviour implied they should, when he said to his Disciples, *the Poor ye have always with you*, Matth. xxvi. 11.

AND if Things are to continue thus, how large a field of Action will there be for those who have *received the Gifts, to minister the same as good Stewards?* How properly will it be the Work of *pure Religion, and undefiled before God, to visit the* <sup>James i. 27.</sup> *Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction?* Not only to make Men good, but to make their  
their



their Goodness extensive and communicated?  
 to enlarge their Souls, and excite in them  
 a Fellow-feeling of the Wants or Happiness  
 of others? That, as the Apostle says, *every*  
 Rom. xv. *one may please his Neighbour for his good to*  
 2. *Edification; may rejoice with them that re-*  
*joice, and mourn with them that mourn, be*  
*tenderhearted and compassionate, and promote*  
*mutual Happiness, as being united in one*  
*mystical Body, and Members one of another.*

SUCH a beneficent and publick Spirit is the  
 nearest resemblance of Providence, the most  
 Heroick and Godlike Quality; and the Ex-  
 ercise of it, as was proposed to be observed,  
*Thirdly*, promotes the general Happiness, and  
 is a common Blessing to the World.

FOR indeed, this Virtue, when it is real,  
 is a very large and noble one; and supposes  
 in the Man that has it, an universal Good-will  
 and unlimited Inclination to do Good; a ge-  
 nerous Application of the Means afforded by  
 Providence, such as Wealth, Power, and Wis-  
 dom, to carry on these Purposes; and that it  
 be always done from a disinterested, a chari-  
 table, and pious Principle.

To provide for ourselves and Families, and to be kind and grateful for Benefits received, are Duties, and as it were Debts contracted; but come not up to the Character of a Publick Spirit; which restrains not itself within the Bounds of Kindred, Friends, Benefactors, or Favourites; but, going beyond all private Regards, launches out into wider Scenes of Action, and aims, with a comprehensive Thought, at what will render God's Glory more conspicuous, Religion and Virtue more triumphant in the World; his National Interests more flourishing: At what will reform and benefit the Age he lives in, or transmit a Blessing to Posterity.

THESE are the good Effects, and such the due Praises, of a compassionate and bounteous Disposition. And how moving an Occasion, how proper and laudable an Instance of it, is this Extensive Charity, this numerous Assembly of poor and friendless Children, which presents itself before you?

It has been the ill Fate of many antient Benefactions, to have been given upon erroneous Principles, and to superstitious Uses; and of some that have been not so given, to be

be misapplied and perverted from the first good Design. Frequent are the Mistakes of the liberal Hand, and the compassionate Heart ; and numberless the Impositions of clamorous Vagrants, of hypocritical Cries, and counterfeit Calamities. Nay, Alms that are given in the common Way of Charity, though to proper Objects, are a Benefaction to the Body only, helping it with Food and Raiment, to linger out a Life, perhaps of little use, and many times of less Comfort ; whereas the Bounty here bestowed is clear of all Suspicion of Fraud or Hypocrisy ; is a Charity to the Mind, instructing and adorning it with the Principles of Piety, Virtue, and good Manners ; is a Charity to the Publick, by instilling the Fear of God and a Sense of Duty in the meanest Ranks of Life, and the lowest Services ; nay, is a Charity beneficial even to the Donors themselves, by the efficacious Prayers and Praises offered to God on their account, by these sincere and grateful Supplicants.

It was one of the Blessings attending our happy Deliverance from Superstition and Arbitrary Power, that such Charity-Schools as these began then to flourish, by the Care and Encouragement of some well-disposed Persons, who with a Zeal truly Religious, had formed them-



themselves into a Society for the cultivating of, what was then thought worth promoting, Christian Knowledge.

THE good Design aimed at, was to restrain and find a Remedy, if possible, for the growing Immorality and Profaneness of the Age: Many good Laws were made for that purpose; Proclamations were frequently issued forth, and a *Society for Reformation of Manners* was with great Zeal and happy Success enter'd into, for the carrying on of that laudable Work; and lest this should prove ineffectual alone for the good Purposes it was intended, the additional Help of another Expedient was thought proper, *viz.* the Encouragement of Charity-Schools, in order to train up, and dispose the Age to come in favour of Religion, by the early Impressions of a pious and virtuous Education.

THIS Thought took wonderfully at that time, and pleased every body; and so great was its Success, as to overcome what nothing else could conquer, even Party Animosities. Men who scarce agreed in any thing else, were seen to concur amicably in furthering this good Work; in lending their Assistance, and contributing cheerfully their Benevolence towards  
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promoting, in this way, the Glory of God, and the Interest of their common Christianity.

THUS Things stood for many Years, Charity-Schools meeting, every where, with Approbation and Encouragement; till at length the Spirit of Disaffection unhappily found its way into this Quarter. Some of the Persons employed in these Trusts were suspected, and perhaps not undeservedly, of being no Friends to our Protestant Government; and that their Principles might lead them to insinuate and teach what they ought not; and to pervert the Charities of well-disposed Persons to a seditious Use.

THIS was the first Prejudice taken against Charity-Schools: But as this Evil complained of was great, so, God be thanked, we may, I believe, truly say it has been effectually cured; at least as far as the Principles of Men can be discovered and searched into, all possible Care has been taken to remove disaffected Teachers, and to guard against such dangerous Assistances for the Time to come.

A SECOND Accusation brought against these Schools, was, that the Children were taught too much, and too fine Singing at Church; and  
this

this was certainly true, and owing to the Imprudence, the Vanity, or the Design, of those who were intrusted with the Care of them. Single Anthems, and Hymns composed on purpose, were introduced into the Parochial Service; and such a Study of, and Skill in Musick affected, as not one in an Hundred of them could hope to get their Bread by; and was enough to spoil and unqualify the rest for the Business and Work they were to go to. But as this Objection was properly made, so we conceive now that it has been fully answered; since an End has been put to such indiscreet Doings, and the Children have been confined, by Authority, to the Use of plain Psalm-Tunes only.

ANOTHER Fault found with these Schools, and of late much complained of, is, that the manner of Education sets the Children above, or diverts them from, the Business of the Spade, the Plough, and of Day-Labour. That while Trades, and all other Employments are overstock'd, Husbandry is destitute of Hands; and the Tillage of the Ground, by which the whole Kingdom subsists, is become very difficult, more expensive than ever, and in some Places almost impracticable.

BUT if this be owing to Charity-Schools, to the Piety and Learning of the Nation, as it much more probably is to its Vice, its Luxury, and Prodigality; it is a Matter, however, which those I am now speaking to, are very little concerned in. For it is certain, I believe, that in these two great Cities, and perhaps it may be so in other trading Towns, and Sea-Ports, the poorest Children born here, have never any of them, before Charity-Schools were thought of, been sent to Plough; but either Trades, or Services, or the Sea, have continually taken off all, and more than all they have produced.

IF it be otherwise in the Country, wherever the Evil and Inconvenience is really found, a better Regulation and effectual Remedy ought no doubt to be applied; either by allotting set Days or Hours only for Instruction; by keeping a certain Number of the Children, and by turns always at work, and thus enuring them to the Business of Husbandry betimes. And, that they may be above no kind of Labour, their Dress should be little regarded on Week-days; they should attend School at leisure Hours only, and at such time as their Friends have no Work for them; and should be taught



taught no more than just their Prayers, and their Catechism, and to read their Bible, and to write plain and legibly; and as soon as ever they are of Years, and big enough, should be dismissed the School; and betake themselves to earn their Bread, by any kind of honest Labour they can get to be employ'd in.

So little Instruction as this, so low a degree of Learning, might, one would think, be safely taught, without danger of its inspiring an undue Elevation of Mind, any Conceit or Vanity. A much higher Attainment and Privilege, that of Religion, of being *adopted Children of God, and Heirs of the Promises*, Gal. iv. 5 Rom. viii. 17. is agreed to alter no Person's Condition in this Life; is consistent with the meanest Station, and the hardest Labour, and the most constant Toil and Drudgery that is undergone; nay, what is more, has a Tendency and Power to carry Men through the straitest Circumstances and the lowest Fortune, with Humility, Chearfulness, and Resignation. *We are by one Spirit*, says the Apostle, *baptized into one Body, whether bond or free*, 1 Cor. xii. 13. *Let as many Servants*, says he, *as are under the Yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all Honour*, 1 Tim. vi. 1. And better, says the Son of Sirach, *is he that laboureth and abound-*  
eth

*eth in all things, than he that boasteth himself and wanteth Bread, Ecclus. x. 27.*

THESE are the common Prejudices, and chief Grounds of Complaint against this modern and excellent Charity ; and which, in no great Number of Years, from being exceeding popular, have brought it into some Discredit. It will be the proper Business therefore, as I hope it has hitherto been, of you, who have now the Care of these Schools, to conduct them with so much Wisdom, as to keep clear of the past Errors, and not to fall into any new ones. That they may regain the Favour and Esteem they fate out with, and enjoyed for many Years ; and may still find Benefactors to support and encourage them. That while you are employed in *this Labour of Love*, and are *ministring in this Stewardship*, the Higher Powers may take no Umbrage, nor your Country apprehend any Prejudice. That all Matter of *Offence*, all *Appearances of it*, may be *abstain'd from*, and your *Good*, as the Apostle directs, *not to be evil spoken of*.

Heb. vi. 10.  
1 Thess. v. 22.  
Rom. xiv. 16.

NOT, I mean deservedly ; for evil spoken of you will, and must expect to be, and that *for your Works sake*, in this corrupt, this unbelieving,

Mark viii. 38.

believing, and *sinful Generation*. For, besides the specious Arguments, and pretended Dislikes, suggested by Avarice, or Hard heartedness; you are to engage with a numerous Host of Opposers and Adversaries upon Principle. Your educating these Children in the Fear of God, with a Reverence for Things sacred, and under the Awe and Influence of Religion, will make you the proper Objects of the Derision and Obloquy of profane, licentious Scoffers. The zealous and blindfolded Profelytes of *Rome* will accuse and condemn you, for teaching these Children to read, what they would not suffer them to look into, the Holy Bible. They who separate from our Communion, and disapprove of our Established Worship, will have the less liking to these Schools, when they consider them as so many Nurseries of Conformity. And the pretended Advocates of Reason, and the Light of Nature, will be sure to be your Enemies, for the Creed and the Catechism you teach; for the Service you are doing to Revealed Religion, and the Foundations you lay for Christianity.

ALL this Opposition will, I say, be the natural Result of the faithful Execution of your Office; is a Testimony of the good Cause



Cause you are engaged in; and the more diligent and successful you are, the more serviceable you prove to God, the more you will certainly incur the Hatred and Enmity of the Devil.

LET it, however, be no great Discouragement to you *to be reproached, or to suffer for well-doing.* But rather *approve yourselves,* as the Apostle advises, 2 Cor. vi. *by a patient Continuance in it,* by persevering under the *Power of God, and the Armour of Righteousness,* to glorify your heavenly Father, *by Honour and Dishonour; by evil Report, and good Report; as Deceivers, and yet true.* And *marvel not, my Brethren, if the* <sup>1 John</sup> *World hate you;* but let it be your Consolation and your Joy; neither to be overcome by, nor conformed to it. <sup>xiii. 3.</sup>

THE training up of poor and friendless Children in the Ways of Instruction, of Virtue and Religion, is a good Work you need never be ashamed of, is a Charity dictated by human Nature, applauded by sound Reason, and what will stand the Test of the strictest Examination. It is indeed the noblest Instance of a Spirit truly Great and Publick; is

is a Patriotism without Envy, Ambition, or mercenary Motives.

MAY the Hearts and Hands therefore of all that wish well to the promoting of the Fear of God, and Christian Knowledge, be ever open for the Maintenance and Encouragement of these Charities; may the Care and Direction of them be always intrusted with such as will *minister the same as good Stewards*; and may the gracious Favour of *the Father of the Fatherless* go along with, and <sup>*Psalms*</sup> <sup>*lxviii. 5.*</sup> so prosper this useful and excellent Undertaking; that this whole Assembly of Children, and all others in these Circumstances, and under the like Tuition, may fully answer the pious Purposes of their Patrons and Benefactors; may behave otherwise in whatever Labour or Service they shall be employ'd in, than the undisciplined and uninstructed; and become, in time, *fruitful of good Works* <sup>*col. i. 10.*</sup> themselves.

So shall all, who are concerned in the Support and Management of these Schools, find Comfort and Satisfaction in the charitable Work they have set their Hands to; be duly honoured with the Thanks and Praises

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of all good Men ; and see the happy Effect of their Labour shine conspicuous before Men, in the Growth of Virtue, the Increase of Good Manners, and the Amendment of a dissolute Age, and consequently the Glory of Almighty God, which, *whatsoever we do, all is to be done to*, will be advanced and magnified ; his great and venerable Name be more duly *halloed* ; *his Kingdom sooner come* ; and *his holy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

AND that all this may be effectually brought to pass, for the Improvement of our Happiness here, and for the Eternal Enjoyment of it hereafter, God of his infinite Mercy grant, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*



*F I N I S.*



